On a sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully. He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table.

"When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place.

Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table.

For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Then he said to the host who invited him, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.
For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Our Scripture Reflection

The Passover dinner which Luke describes in today’s scripture was a rather festive occasion in Our Lord’s day. Being seated as closely as possible to the host would indicate to the other guests one’s importance in society. Jesus’ advice to the guests in order to avoid embarrassment is for them to wait to be seated by the host lest they be asked to get up from their chosen seats in order to make way for someone considered by the host to be of greater social importance. He then gives advice to the host which flies in the face of the “Quid Pro Quo” behavior of the day. Rather than invite people of importance who have the means to reciprocate, invite, instead, those who have no possible way of doing so. God, Himself, will ultimately vindicate and reciprocate merciful and humble acts on behalf of the “little people.”

Food for your Journey

Years ago, after I asked God to fill my cup, it seemed, instead, that he ate my lunch. As I saw my dreams fade away, I worked harder to hold on and eventually burned out. I wondered where God was and why he let it happen. Now as I reflect back, I wonder if he could not fill my cup because I already had it full with my personal agenda. I wanted to accomplish great things for God, but I had my own ideas. Perhaps he was waiting for me to empty the unusable contents so he could pour in his plan. When we admit our need and ask God for help, it is like emptying our life cups. Emptiness, though uncomfortable, is a necessary prerequisite to filling. Our overflowing cups yield anxiety. God’s portion produces security. --Joan C. Webb, Meditations for Christians Who Try to Be Perfect (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 83.

A Prayer from the Heart

Most Holy Father, With the power of Your Grace, strip me of all arrogance, haughtiness and self-righteousness. Make me humble as Your Only Son Jesus was completely humble. May I always strive to put You and others before myself. Amen